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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 19, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for February 19, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. THIRTY-FIVE PEOPLE ARRESTED IN ADANA (Milli Gazete/Sabah/Bolge) The Adana security Directorate arrested 35 people who were identified to be involved in various actions such as demonstrations, blocking roads, and tossing Molotov cocktails, sticks and stones against security forces. After their interrogation it was stated that their actions aimed at improving terrorist leader Ocalan's prison conditions and ending his isolation. Security officials stated that these individuals were preparing to take actions against public institutions.

3. VILLAGE GUARDS REFUSE TO BE CONTRACT SOLDIERS (Milli Gazete) The temporary village guards working in Hakkari said they did not want to be American contract soldiers. Leader of Jirki Clan Mehmet Adiyeman said that three thousand members of the clan were village guards, and in case of war against Iraq they will be ready to fight along with the Turkish Army. Adiyeman said they have received information that America would like to see village guards on their side in a possible war against Iraq. He said they did not want America's money to become contract soldiers.

4. TURKISH RED CRESCENT PREPARES FOR POSSIBLE WAR (Milli Gazete/Turkiye) Kizilay is preparing for immigrants coming to Turkey because of a possible war against Iraq. Kizilay is carrying equipment from warehouses in Ankara, Elazig and Erzurum to Sirkak where they will establish the main warehouse. Milli Gazete reports that a group of 60 people from Turkish Red Crescent will go to northern Iraq to make preliminary preparation for tents to be set up for refugees. The Health Ministry held a meeting with provincial health directorates in southeastern Turkey yesterday to prepare for the refugees. The Health Ministry is aiming at providing health services to one hundred thousand people.

5. EIGHTEEN ARRESTED IN PROTEST OF ISOLATION (Evrensel) Eighteen people were arrested in Hakkari, Van and Mersin for participating in demonstrations in favor of PKK/KADEK leader Abdullah Ocalan. The Labor, Peace and Democracy Bloc protested in Mersin against war and Ocalan's isolation; police intervened. Mersin DEHAP provincial chairman Muzaffer Akad was among the 18 people who were beaten and later arrested.

6. DEHAP SAYS "NO TO WAR" (Bolge) Adana DEHAP provincial chairman Mehmet Cangelik stated in his speech that Turkey is being dragged into war regardless of the increasing demand for peace. America's intervening will mean death to the people in the Middle East.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

7. THE PORT THAT AMERICA WANTS (Hurriyet) American Ships carrying soldiers and equipment have been near Turkish territorial

waters for days. If the Turkish National Assembly approves, these ships will first dock at Iskenderun port. The port is waiting for the fifty million dollar investment for modernization. The telephone company has connected special telephone lines to the port, and cranes have removed scrap equipment. Two warehouses in the port have been rented to Americans. Hurriyet reports that American vessels were as close as twelve miles to Iskenderun before the Sacrifice Holiday. On Monday these vessels withdrew to a point between Syria and North Cyprus.

18. BOMB-LOADED FLIGHTS ON INCIRLIK AIR BASE (Tercuman/Milli Gazete) The activity continued at Incirlik airbase yesterday with F-15 and F-16 jets loaded with bombs flying to northern Iraq. Tercuman reports that some of the F-16 jets returned with bombs, yet some came back without bombs. The intensity continued on the ground with the repair and maintenance of the runway.
HOLTZ